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The Last Farewell.

The last farewell I took of thee,
My injured native isle!
Was lisped in silent agony,
Though soothed by a smile.
I smiled, but O, that smile was sad,
For gloom was round my heart;
And those who thought I then was glad,
Knew not the inward part.

I feigned a smile, 'tis true, and cheered
The friends who flocked around;
Friends from my infancy endeared,
Who on me never frowned.
And O, their parting words to me,
With sighs and tears combined;
Although I'm now among the free,
Hang heavy on my mind.

And fairest of my sisters, Kate,
I still think on the scarf
You wayed to me that evening, late,
When sailing by Cloutarf;
Methinks I still behold the hair,
Which played on thy white neck;
That I gazed on, until in air
You dwindled to a speck.

And well I still remember, then,
The cheer my brothers gave;
As from the ship I answered them
Back o'er the rising wave.
And when their voices died away,
I still sent cheers behind,
Until, o'er Erin's fairest bay,
They mingled with the wind.

What sadness filled me, as I gazed
On the receding shore;
When I my eyes and hands upraised,
To bless it evermore.
And still fond prayers, my native land,
I offer up for thee,
To Him who has the sole command,
And shall forever be.

Hope.

The sun may sink beneath the wave,
And darkness shroud the main,
But soon from out the night's deep grave
The morn will rise again.
The summer's smile and fragrant bloom
At winter's frown may part,
But spring shall waken from the tomb
To warm earth's icy heart.

And thus within the human breast
The summer's sun may set,
The sun depart, and life be dressed
In darkness and regret;
But like the flower that bursts the tomb,
Or light that bathes the skies,
Still over all life's woe and gloom
The sun of hope will rise.

An Abolitionist at Fault.

'I had a brother-in-law,' said Mose Parkins who was one of the ravenest, maddest, reddest-hottest abolitionists you ever see. I liked the pesky critter well enough, and should have been very glad to see him cum to spend a day, fetchin' my sister to see me and my wife, if he hadn't lowered his tongue to run on so bout niggers and slavery, and the equality of the races, and the duty of overthrown the Constitution of the United States, and a lot of other things, some of which made me mad, and the best part of 'em right sick. I puzzled my brains a good deal to think how I could make him shut up his noisy head 'bout abolition."

'Wall, one time when brother-in-law came over to stay, an idea struck me. I hired a nigger to help me a haying time. He was the biggest, ugliest, strongest, greasiest nigger you ever see. 'Black!' he was blacker than a stack of black cats, and jest as shiney as a new beaver hat. I spoke to him: 'Jake,' says I, when you hear the breakfast bell ring, don't you say a word, says I' but you come into the parlor, and sit right down among the folks and eat your breakfast.' The nigger's eyes stuck out of his head about a feet. 'You're a jokin, massa,' sez he.—'Jokin,' sez I. I am as sober as a deacon.' 'But,' sez he, 'I shant have time to wash myself and change my shirt.' 'So much the better,' sez I. Well—breakfast came—and so did Jake, and he set right down 'long side my brother-in-law. *He* started, but he didn't say a word. There warn't no mistake about it. Shut your eyes and you'd know it, for he was loud I tell you. There was a fust rate chance to talk abolitionism, but brother-in-law never opened his chowderhead-

'Jake,' sed I, "you be on hand at dinner time;" and he was. He had been working in the medder all the forenoon—it was as hot as hickory and bilin' pitch—and—but I leave the rest to your imaginations.

'Wall—in the afternoon brother-in-lrw come to me madder than a short tailed bull in hornet time.

'Mose,' sed he I want to speak to you.'

'Sing it out,' sez I.

'I hain't but a few words to say,' sez he, *but* if that 'ere confouned nigger comes to the table again while I'm stoppin' here, I'll clear out.'

'Jake ate his supper in the kitchen that night, but from that day to this I never saw my brother-in law open his head about abolitionism. When the Fugitive Slave bill was passed, I thought he'd let out some, but he didn't, for he know'd that Jake was still wo[illegible] farm.'

ISABEL ALSTON

OR,

THE STEP-MOTHER.

BY GRACE GREENWOOD.

The villagers of N——— well remember the sad morning when the bell tolled for the death of Emma, the once beautiful, lovely and beloved wife of Judge Allston. Many a face was shadowed, many a heart was in mourning on that day; for she who had gone so early to rest, had endeared herself to many by her goodness, gentleness and the beauty of her blameless life. She had been declining for a long time, and yet she seemed to have died suddenly at last, so difficult, so almost impossible it was for those who loved her to prepare for that fearful bereavement, that immeasurable loss.

Mrs. Allston left four children—Isabel, the eldest, an intellectual, generous hearted girl of seventeen, not beautiful, but thoroughly noble looking; Frank, a fine boy of twelve; Emma, "the beauty," a child of seven, and Eddie, the baby, a delicate infant, only about a year old.

Judge Allston was a man of naturally strong and quick feelings, but one who had acquired a remarkable control over his expression, a calmness and reserve of manner often mistaken for hauteur and insensibility. He was alone with his wife when she died. Isabel, wearied with long watching, had laid down for a little rest, and was sleeping with the children; and the mother, even in that hour, tenderly caring for them, would not that they should be wakened. The last struggle was brief but terrible; the spirit seemed torn painfully from its human tenement—the immortal rent its way forth from imprisoning mortality. Yet he, the husband and lover, preserved his calmness through all; and when the last painful breath had been panted out on the still air of midnight, he laid the dear head he had been supporting against his breast gently down on the pillow, kissed the cold, damp forehead and still lips of the love of his youth, and then summoning an attendant, turned away and sought his room, where alone and in darkness he wrestled with the angel of sorrow—wept the swift tears of his anguish, and lacerated his heart with all the vain regrets and wild reproaches of bereaved affection. But with the coming of morning came serenity and resignation; and then he led his children into the silent chamber where lay their mother, already clad in the garments of the grave. There too he was calm, holding the fainting Isabel in his arms, and gently hushing the passionate outcries of Emma and Frank. He was never seen to weep until the first earth fell upon the coffin, and then he covered up his face and sobbed aloud.

Mrs. Allston was not laid in the village church-yard, but was buried, at her own request, within the arbor at the end of the garden. She said that it would not seem that she was thrust out from her home if the light from her own window shone out toward her grave; and that she half believed the beloved voice of her husband, and the singing of her daughter, and laughter of her children, would come to her, when she had her favorite flowers about her, and the birds she had fed and protected building their nests above her in the vines.

When the stunning weight of sorrow, its first distraction and desolation had been taken from the life and spirit of Isabel Allston, one clear and noble purpose took possession of her mind. She would fill the place of her dear mother in the household—she would console and care for her poor father—she would love yet more tenderly her young brother and sister, and bind up ther bruised hearts, so early crushed by affliction—she would be a mother to the babe, which had been its first resting place, grown cold against its little cheek, and hard and insensible to its "waxen touches," now that the voice which had hushed it to its first slumbers had sunk low and faltered and grown still forever, and the kind eyes which shone over its awakening—the stars of love's heaven—had suddenly darkened and gone out in death.

After this it was indeed beautiful to see Isabel in her home. There she seemed to live many lives in one. She superintended all domestic affairs and household arrangements with admirable courage and judgment. Her father never missed any of his accustomed comforts, and her brother and sister were as ever neatly dressed, and well taught and controlled. But on the baby she lavished most of her attention and loving care. She took him to her own room—she dressed, and bathed, and fed him, and carried him with her in all her walks and rides. And she was soon richly rewarded by seeing little Eddie become, from an exceedingly small fragile infant, a well sized, blooming boy, not stout or remarkably vigorous indeed; but quite healthful and active. The child was passionately fond of his "mamma," as he was taught to call Isabel. Though rather imperious and rebellious towards others, he yielded to a word from her at any time. At evening she would summon him from his wildest play to prepare him for his bath and bed, and afterwards he would twine his little arms about her neck, and cover her cheeks, lips and forehead with good night kisses, and then droop his sunny head on her shoulder and fall asleep, often with one of her glossy ringlets twined about his small rosy fingers. At the very break of day the little fellow would be awake, striding over poor Isabel, as she vainly strove for one hour's brief delicious doze, pulling her long black eyelashes, and peeping under the drowsy lids, or shouting into her half dreaming ear his vociferous "good morning!"

And Frank and Emma found ever in their sister-mother ready sympathy, patient sweetness, and affectionate counsel.

They were never left to feel the crushing neglect, the loneliness, the desolation of orphantage; and they were happy and affectionate in return for all dear Isabel's goodness and faithfulness. Yet were they never taught to forget their mother, gone from them—neither to speak of her always with sorrow and solemnity. Her name was often on their young lips, and her name kept green and glowing on their tender hearts. Her grave in the garden arbor—what a dear familiar place! There sprang the first blue violets of spring—there blowed the last pale chrysanthemums of autumn—there sweet Sabbath hymns and prayers were repeated by childish voices, which struggled up through tears—there morning after morning were reverently laid bright fragrant wreaths, which kept quite fresh till far in the hot summer day, on that shaded mound—and there innumerable times was the beloved name kissed in sorrowful emotion, by those warm lips, which half shrank as they touched the cold marble, so like her lips when they had last kissed them.

Thus passed two years over that bereaved family—over Judge Allston, grown a cheerful man, though one still marked by great reserve of manner—over his noble daughter Isabel, happy in the perfect performance of her whole duty—and over the children, the good and beautiful children, whom an angel mother might have smiled upon from Heaven.

It happened that this third summer of his widowhood, Judge Allston spent more time than ever before at the city of S———, the county seat, and the place where lay most of his professional duties. But it was rumored that there was an unusual attraction in that town—one apart from, and quite independent of the claims of business and the pursuits of ambition. It was said the thoughtful and dignified Judge had sometimes been seen walking and riding with a certain tall and slender woman in deep mourning, probably a widow, but still young and beautiful.

At length an officious family friend came to Isabel, and informed her without much delicacy or circumlocution, of the prevalent rumors, thus giving her the first inkling of a state of affairs which must have a serious bearing on your own welfare and happiness—her first intimation that she might soon be called upon to resign her place as a stranger—*a step mother!*—*This* had been her secret fear; to guard against the necessity of this, she had struggled with grief and weariness, and manifold discouragements, had labored uncomplainingly, and prayed without ceasing for patience and strength.

Pale and still listened Isabel, while her zealous friend went on, warming momently with her subject—commenting severely on the heartless machinations of "the widow," who, though only a poor music teacher, had set herself, with her coquettish arts, to ensnare a man of the wealth, and station, and *years* of Judge Allston. Isabel was silent; but she writhed at the thought of her father, with all his intellect and knowledge of the world, becoming the dupe of a vain, designing woman.

When her visitor had left, Isabel flew in her own room, flung herself into a chair, and covering her face with her hands wept as she had not wept since the first dark days of her sorrow. Isabel had grown up with deep peculiar prejudices against step-mothers; probably from knowing that the childhood and girlhood of her own idolized mother had been cruelly darkened and suddened by the harshness and injustice of a step-mother; and now there were bitterness and sharp pain in the thought that those dear children, for she cared little for herself, must be subjected to the 'iron rule' of an unloving and silent heart.

But she resolutely calmed down the tumult of feeling, as she would fain keep her trouble from her children while there still remained a blessed uncertainty. Yet she slept little that night, but folded Eddie, her babe, closer and closer to her breast, and wept over him, till his light curls were heavy with her tears.

The next morning, which was Tuesday, while Isabel sat at breakfast with her children, a letter was brought in, directed to her. It was from her father at S——. Isabel trembled as she read, and at last grew very pale, and leaned her head on her hand. As she had feared, that the letter contained a brief announcement of the approaching marriage of her father. There was no natural embarrassment exhibited; there was no apology made for this being the first intimation to his family of an event of so great moment to them; such things were not in his way—not in character. He wrote: "Celilia Weston, whom I have now known nearly two years, and of whom you may have heard me speak, is a noble woman, the only one whom I consider fully competent to fill your dear mother's place.

We are to have a strictly private wedding on Saturday morning next, and will be with you in the evening. To you Isabel, my dear child, I trust I need give no charges to show towards Mrs. Allston from the first, if not the tenderness and affection of a daughter, the respect and consideration due the wife of your father. *This* at least, I shall exact from all my children if it be not, as I fervently hope it will be, given willingly and gracefully."

When Isabel found strength and voice to read this letter of her father's aloud, the unexpected intelligence which it contained was received with blank amazement and troubled silence. This was first broken by the passionate and impetuous little Emma, who exclaimed with flashing eye and gleaming teeth, "I wont have a new mother! I wont have any mother but Isabel. I hate that Cecilia Weston, and I'll tell her so the very first thing! I wont let her kiss me, and I wont kiss papa, if he brings her here. Oh, sister dont ask her to take off her things when she comes, and may be she wont stay all night!"

"Hush, hush, darling!" said Isabel, "I think it probable you will like her very much. I hear that she is a very beautiful woman."

"No, I wont like her! I don't believe she is pretty at all; but a cross, ugly old thing, that will scold me and beat me, and make me wear frights of dresses, and may be cut off my curls!"

This last moving picture was quite too much for "Beauty," and she burst into tears, covering her ringleted head all up with her inversed pinafore.

Frank, now a tall, noble-hearted boy of fourteen, was calm and manly under these trying circumstances, but expressed a stern resolve, which he clinched by an impressive classical oath, never, *never* to call the unwelcome stranger *"mother."* "Mrs. Allston" would be sufficiently respectful, and by that name, and that only, would he call her.

Isabel said nothing, but inwardly resolved thus to address the young wife of her father.

During this scene, little Eddie, who only understood enough to perceive that something was wrong, some trouble brewing, ran to his mamma, and hiding his face in her lap, began to cry very bitterly and dispairingly. But Isabel soon reconciled him to life, by administering sacharine consolation from the sugar bowl before her.

It was, finally, with saddened and anxious spirits, the little affectionate family circle broke up that morning.

With the bustle and hurry of necessary preparations, the week passed rapidly, and brought Saturday evening, when the Allstons with a few family friends, were awaiting the arrival of the Judge and and his fair bride.

There were not many marks of festivity in the handsome drawing-room; there was somewhat more light, perhaps, and a few more flowers than usual. Isabel, who had never laid off mourning for her mother, wore to-night a plain black silk, with a rich lace cape, and white rose-buds in her hair. Emma was dressed in a light blue barege, with her pet curls floating around her waist.

At length, rather late in the evening, a carriage was heard coming up the avenue, and soon after Judge Allston entered the drawing-room, with a tall and slender lady leaning on his arm. Shrinking from the glare of light, and with her head modestly bowed, Mrs. Allston entered more as a timid and ill-assured guest, than as the newly appointed mistress of that elegant mansion. Isabel advanced immediately to be presented; offered her hand alone, but that cordially; made some polite inquiries concerning the journey, and proceeded to assist the bride in removing her bonnet and shawl. She then called Emma, who advanced shyly, eying the enemy askance. She extended her hand in a half diffident, half defiant manner; but Mrs. Allston, clasping it in both hers, bent down and kissed her, smiling as she did so, on the loveliness of that face. The blood shot up to the very brow of the child, as she turned and walked quickly away to a distant window seat, where she sat and looked out upon the garden. It was a moonlight night, and she could see the gleaming of the white tombstone within, and she wondered sadly if her mother, lying there in her grave, knew about this woman, and was troubled for her children's sake.

Frank was presented by his father, with much apparent pride, to his young step-mother, who looked searchingly, though kindly, into his handsome, yet serious face.

It was some time before Isabel found the opportunity to observe closely the person and manners of her father's bride. Mrs. Allston was, as I have said, tall; but would not have been observably so, perhaps, except for the extreme delicacy of her figure. She was graceful and gentle in her movements—not absolutely beautiful in her face, but very lovely, with a most winning smile, and a sor of earnest sadness in the expression of her soft hazel eyes, which Isabel recognized at once as a spell of deep power—the spell which had enthralled the heart of her thoughtful and unsusceptible father. She looked about twenty-five, and did not look unsuited to Judge Allston, who, with the glow of happiness lighting up his face, and sparkling from his fine dark eyes, appeared to all, far younger and handsomer than usual.

Isabel felt that her father was not entirely satisfied with the reception which his wife had met from his children; but he did not express any dissatisfaction that night or ever after.

It was a happy circumstance for Isabel, in her embarrassed position, that the next day was the Sabbath, as going to church and attending to her household duties absorbed her time and attention; thus preventing any ackward *tete-a-tete* with one whose very title, *step-mother*, had arrayed her heart against her in suspicion, and determined, though unconscious antagonism.

On Sunday afternoon, about the sunset hour, Judge Allston had been wont to go with his children to visit the grave of their mother; but this sabbath evening, I need hardly say, he was not with them there.

"How cool and shadowy looks that arbor at the end of the garden, where Miss Allston and the children are. Let us join them, dear Charles," said Mrs. Allston to her husband, as they two sat at the pleasant south window of their chamber.

Judge Allston hesitated a moment, and then said in a low tone—"That arbor, dear Cecelia, is the place where my Emma lies buried."

The young wife looked startled, and somewhat troubled, but said nothing.

On Monday, Isabel, after showing her step-mother over the house, resigned into her hands the house-keeper's keys, with all the priviliges and dignities of domestic authority.

Day after day went by, and Isabel preserved the same cold, guarded manner towards her step-mother, though she often met those soft, hazel eyes fixed upon her, with a half pleading, half reproachful look, which she found it difficult to resist. Frank and Emma still remained shy and distant, and "the baby," constitutionally timid, would scarce look at the stranger lady, who sought in an anxious ill-assured way, to win its love and confidence. As little Eddie shrank from those delicate, inviting hands, and clung about Isabel, she would clasp him yet closer to her heart, and kiss his bright head with passionate fondness.

On Friday afternoon Mrs. Allston's piano arrived. This was a great event in the family, for Isabel did not play, though she sang very sweetly, and Frank and Emma had both a decided taste for music. Mrs. Allston was gifted with a delicious voice, which she had faithfully cultivated, and she playing with both skill and feeling.

All the eveng sat Judge Allston, gazing proudly and tenderly upon the performer, and listening with all his soul. Isabel was charmed in spite of all her fears and prejudices, and the children were half beside themselves with delight.

The next morning as she came in from her walk, hearing music in the parlor, Isabel entered, and found her step-mother playing and singing the "May Queen," with Emma close at her side, and Frank turning over the leaves of the music. The touching words of the song had already brought tears; and when it was finished Mrs. Allston suddenly dashed off in a merry waltz, and presently Frank was whirling his pretty sister round and round the room to those wild, exhilarating notes. When the play eased, "O thank you, *mother!*" said Emma going up to Mrs. Allston. In a moment the step-mother's arms were about the waist and her lips pressed against the lips of the child. That name, and the glad embrace which followed, struck the foreboding heart of Isabel. Her eyes involuntarily sought the face of Frank, and she was not displeased to remark the lowering of his brow and the slight curl of his lips.

But the eveuing of the next day, Isabel, on entering the parlor, found Frank alone with his beautiful step-mother, sitting on a low ottomon at her side, as she half reclined on a sofa, and leaning his head against her knee, while her soft white fingers were threading his wavy, luxuriant hair. Isabel, giving one startled glance at the two, who were chatting pleasantly and familiarly together, crossed the room and took up a book. Presently, Frank rose and came and stood by her side. She looked up and murmured with a slighly reproachful smile. *"Et tu brute."* The boy colored, and soon after left the room.

Thus the day wore on, Isabel feeling her treasures wrested one after another from the fond and jealous hold of her heart; sorrowing in secret over her loss, and still pressing her mother's holiest legacy, her child, dear little Eddie, close and closer to her breast.

One afternoon, when the hour came for their daily ride, she missed the child from her room. After looking through parlor, kitchen, and hall, and calling through the garden, she sought Mrs. Allston's chamber, from whence, as she knocked at the door, she heard the sound of singing and laughter. "Come in!" said a light, musical voice. She opened the door hastily, and there sat little traitorous Eddie, in his step-mother's lap, playing with her long, auburn ringlets, while she sang him merry songs and nursery rhymes.

"Eddie!" exclaimed Isabel, somewhat sharply, "you must come with mamma and be dressed for a ride."

"No, no," cried the perverse child, "I don't wan't to ride—I'd rather stay with my pretty new mamma, and hear her sing about 'Little Boo-peep.'"

"No, my dear, you must go with your sister," said Mrs. Allston, striving to set the little fellow down.

Isabel advanced to take him, but he buried his face in his step-mother's lap, and screamed, "Go away, go away; I love this mamma best—I won't go to ride with you!"

Pale as death, Isabel turned hurriedly and passed from the room. She almost flew through the house and garden, to the arbor, to the grave of her mother. There she flung herself upon the turf, and clasped the mound, and passed her wounded heart against it and wept aloud.

"They have all left me!" she cried; "I am robbed of all love, all comfort; I am lonely and desolate. Oh my mother!"

While thus she lay, sorrowing with all the bitterness of a new bereavement, she was started by a deep sigh, and looking up, beheld Mrs. Allston standing by her side. Instantly she sprang to her feet, exclaiming, "Have I then no refuge? Is not even *this* spot sacred from officious and unwelcome intrusion?"

"Oh, forbear, I entreat!" exclaimed Mrs. Allston, with a sudden gush of tears. "Pray do not speak thus of me!—you do not know me. I seek to love you, to be loved by you—this is all my sin."

Isabel was softened by those tears, and murmured some half articulated apology for the passionate feeling which she had exhibited.

"Dear Isabel," said her step-mother, "will you hear my little history, and then judge whether I have erred in assuming the relation which I now bear towards you?"

Isabel bowed her head in assent, and Mrs. Allston seated herself in the arbor, but Isabel remained standing, with a firm set lip and her arms folded.

"I fear," began Cecelia, "that your father has not been as communicative and confidential with you as he should have. I heard from him this morning, with much surprise, that he had told you very little concerning me and our first acquaintance. He said that you never seemed to wish for confidence, and he could not thrust it upon you. I know that you must wonder greatly how your beloved father could choose a woman like me—poor and without station, or high connections."

"No," replied Isabel, coldly; "on the contrary, I wonder most that you, so young and richly endowed by nature, could prefer a man of years and character of my father. I know not what there is in him for a beautiful woman to fancy."

"Ah, Isabel," said Mrs. Allston, looking up reproachfully, "I never *fancied* your father. It is with a worthier, deeper, holier feeling that I regard him."

Isabel sat down on the rustic seat near her step-mother, who cotinued in a low but fervent tone—

"Yes, Isabel, I *love* your father, dearly love him; and he is the only man I have ever loved."

"What!" exclaimed Isabel, "were you not then a widow when you married him?"

"Why, no, dear. Why do you suppose it?"

"I heard so—at least I heard that you were in deep mourning."

"That was for my mother," replied Mrs. Allston, with a quivering lip; "yet until now, I have not been out of mourning for many years. I have seen much sorrow, Isabel."

The warm-hearted girl drew nearer to her step-mother, who, after a brief pause, continued—

"My father, who was a lawyer of S——, died while I was quite young—a school girl, away from home, already pursuing with ardor the study of music. He left my mother very little besides the house in which she lived. My only brother, Alfred, a noble boy, in whom our best hopes were centered, had entered college, only the year before father died. Then it was that my mother, with the true courage of a true heroine, and the devotion of a martyr, resolved to remove neither of her children from their studies, but by her own unassisted labor, to keep me at my school, and Alfred in college.

"She opened a large boarding house in S——, principally for gentlemen of the bar; and almost from the first was successful; I remained two years longer at school, when a lucrative situation was offered me as a teacher of music in the family of a wealthy Southern Senator. I parted with my mother, with dear Alfred, and went with the Ashtons to Georgia. There I remained, year after year, ever toiling cheerfully in the blessed hope of returning North, with the means of restoring my beloved mother to her former social position, and of freeing her from toil and care for the remainder of her days. This was the one constant desire of my heart—the one great purpose of my life. I thought not of pleasure—I cared not for distinction or admiration, or love. I only thought of her—my patient, self-sacrificing angel mother."

Here Isabel drew nearer, and laid her hand in that of her step-mother, who pressed it gently, as she continued—

"Brother Alfred, immediately on leaving college, commenced the study of the law. I shall ever fear that he confined himself too closely, and studied too intensely. His constitution was delicate, like his father's, and after a year or two, his health, never vigorous, began to fail. Mother finally wrote me that she was anxious about him; though she added, perhaps her affection for the beloved one made her needlessly fearful. Yet I was alarmed, and hastened home some months before my engagement had expired. I had then been absent five years, but I had seen mother and Alfred once in that time, when they had met me on the sea-shore.

"It was a sultry afternoon in August when I reached S——, I shall never forget how wretchedly long and weary seemed the last few miles, and how eagerly I sprang down the carriage steps at last—left my baggage at the hotel, and ran over to my mother's house alone. I entered without knocking, and went directly to our mother's little private parlor—the room of the household. I opened the door gently so as to surprise them. At the first glance I thought the room was empty; but on looking again I saw some one extended on the little familiar chintz-colored sofa. It was Alfred, asleep there. I went softly up and looked down upon his face. Oh, God! what a change! It was thin and white, save a small red spot on either cheek. One hand laid half-buried in his dark, chestnut curls, which alone preserved their beauty, and that hand—how slender and delicate it had grown, and how distinct was every blue vein, even the smallest! As I stood there, my heart wrung with sudden grief, my tears fell so fast on his face that he awoke, and half raised himself, looking up with a bewildered expression.

"Just then dear mother came in, and we all embraced each other, and thanked God out of the overflowing fullness of our hearts. As I looked at Alfred then, his eye was so bright and his smile so glad—so like the *old smile*—I took courage again; but he suddenly turned away and coughed slightly—but *such* a cough! It smote upon my heart like a knell.

"When I decended from my chamber that evening, after laying aside my traveling-dress, I found a gentleman, a stranger, sitting by Alfred's side, reading to him, in a low, pleasant voice. That stranger, Isabel, was your father—Alfred's best and most beloved friend.

"I will not pain your heart by dwelling on our great sorrow, as we watched that precious life, the treasury of many hopes and much love passing away.—With the fading of the leaf, with the dying of the flowers he died!"

Here Mrs. Allston paused, and covered her face with her hands, while tears slid down through her fingers. And she wept not alone. At length she continued:

"I have since felt with poor Alfred's last dying kiss, the chill of death entered into dear mother's heart; for she never was well after that night. Though she sorrowed bitterly for that only son, so good and beautiful, she said she wished to live for my sake. Yet vain was that meek wish—vain were my love and care—vain the constant, agonized pleading of my soul with the Giver of life. She failed and drooped daily, and within a year, she was laid beside father, and very near to Alfred. She died, and left me alone—alone in the wide world! Oh, how often dear Isabel, have I, like you, cried out with that exceeding bitter cry of the orphan, 'Oh, mother, mother!'"

Here Isabel flung her arms around her step-mother, and pressed her lips against her cheek.

"In all this time," pursued Cecelia, "my chief advisor and consoler was the early friend of my mother, the generous patron of my brother—your father, Isabel. And when the first fearful days of my sorrow had gone by, and he came to me in the loneliness and desolation of my life, and strove to give me comfort and courage—telling me at last that he needed my love, even the love of my poor crushed heart—then I felt that in loving him and his, I might hope for happiness evermore. But ah! if in loving him—in becoming his wife, I have brought unhappiness to those near him, and darkened the light of their home, I am indeed, miserable?"

"Oh, do not say so—do not say so?" exclaimed Isabel. "You have won all our hearts. Have you not seen how the children have drawn towards you—even Eddie, *my babe?* I have not called you by *her* name—I do not know that I can so call you so here, but I can and will love you, and we shall all be very happy; and, by God's help 'kindly affected' one to another!"

"Ah, my dear girl," replied Mrs. Allston, with a sweet smile, "I do not ask you to call me by a name of so much sacredness and dignity; only love me and confide in me—lean upon my heart and let me be to you as an elder sister."

* * * * * *

The evening had come, and Mrs. Allston, Isabel, and the children, were assembled in the pleasant family-parlor, awaiting the return of Judge Allston from his office. Isabel was holding little Eddie on her knee.—The child had already repeatedly begged pardon for his naughtiness, and was full as ever of his loving demonstration. Cecelia was, as usual, seated at the piano playing half unconciously, every now and then glancing impatiently out of the window into the gathering darkness. Isabel sat down the baby-boy, and going up to her said—

"Will you play the "*Old Arm-chair*" for me?"

"If you will sing with me," replied Cecelia, with a smile.

The two began with voices somewhat tremulous, but they sang on till they came to the passage—

"I've sat and watched her day by day,
"While her eye grew dim"

here they both broke down.

Cecelia rose and wound her arms around Isabel's waist, and Isabel leaned her head on Cecelia's shoulder, and they wept together. At that moment Judge Allston entered, and after a brief pause of bewilderment, advanced with a smile, and clasped them both in one embrace. He said not a word then; but afterward, when he bade Isabel good-night, at the foot of the stair-way, he kissed her more tenderly than usual, saying as he did so, "God bless you my daughter!"

A Quaker Wedding.

Married in this city yesterday, at the Quaker Meeting House, on Fifth street; Mr. HENRY SHIPLEY of this city, to Miss HANNAH D. TAYLOR of Newport.

A large company assembled at the unostentatious church of the Society of Friends yesterday at 11 o'clock, to witness so unusual an occurrence as a Quaker wedding.—As the spirit moved us to be present, we propose to give a description of the ceremony. It was a regular monthly meeting of the Friends, a small though highly respected Society worshiping regularly at the house above mentioned. When we arrived the church was nearly filled with young ladies who had been attracted there by curiosity, their gay dresses contrasting strongly with the sober drab of the three or four rows of Quaker ladies occupying seats on the opposite side of the house, and fronting the main audience. The shad-bellies and broad-brims slipped quietly into the seats in the men's division of the house, and commenced their silent communion with their own spirits and the spirits of the unseen world. After a half hour's profound silence, there was some appearance of uneasiness among the spectators. We were amused at a whispered conversation between a country girl and her more knowing city companion.

"What do these women wear such awful looking bonnets for? They look like half hornet's nest; half coal-scuttle."

"Hush; that's the Quaker fashion."

"Where is their minister?"

"They have no minister."

"Who preaches then?"

"All of them, or any of them, just as they happen to feel."

"Why don't the meeting begin?"

"Hush up; the meeting has been begun this half hour."

"Why, nobody has said a word, and the men have got their hats on."

"Never mind, somebody will speak soon, provided the spirit moves them, and they always wear their hats in church."

"O, I know; they are waiting for the bride and groom."

"No, indeed, they've been here half an hour; don't you see them sitting directly opposite—that handsome young man in gold specs, and the lady beside him, dressed in plain white satin."

"I want to know if that's them; they don't look Quakerish a bit. I should like to know who's agoing to marry them?"

"Nobody; they will marry themselves."

"Marry themselves! well, why in the world don't they begin? What are they waiting for?"

"Waiting for the spirit to move."

Another half hour passed in solemn silence, at the end of which time the bride and bridegroom arose, facing the audience, the bridegroom pronounced the following words:

"I, Henry Shipley, in the presence of God, and of this assembly, take this woman to be my wedded wife, promising, with Divine assistance to be a faithful and loving husband, as long as we both shall live."

The bride then, in a voice somewhat faltering, repeated a similar declaration, and both sat down.

Two young men of the Society then placed before them a small bible, containing a huge parchment scroll, which they opened, and in the presence of the assembly the bride and groom affixed their signatures. An elder of the church then read the document aloud to the audience. It set forth that the parties had, at the regular monthly meeting preceding, signified their intention of marriage, that the Society had approved of the same, and that by their joint declarations and signatures they had arrived a "full accomplishment of their intentions." He then stated that all the Friends were invited to sign as witnesses, after the close of the meeting.

After a few moments more of silence, the newly married cople suddenly rose and left the church, and were followed by the whole congregation. The audience was well pleased with the ceremony, which we think was the most sensible we ever witnessed.—*Chs. Nonpareil.*

☞ A minister was walking out one day and passed two little boys, one of whom bowed. As he turned his back, he heard the following amusing conversation:

"Why, John, didn't you know that was parson M?"

"Yes, of course I did."

"Why did you not make a bow to him?"

"Why my mother don't belong to his church."

☞ "Will you keep an eye on my horse my son, while I step in and get a drink?"

"Yes sir."

[Stranger goes in, gets his drink, comes out and finds his horse missing.]

"Where is my horse, boy?"

"He's runn'd away, sir."

"Didn't I tell you to take care of him, you young scamp?"

"No sir, you told me to keep my eye on him, and I did till he got clean out of sight.

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